

## There is Life after a Guilty Verdict—advice from a survivor

This information is from a range of self-help sheets written by survivors for survivors. The words were carefully chosen to let you and other survivors know that you're not alone, and it is possible to have a hopeful, confident future.

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As you stand in the witness box giving your evidence, when you wait for that telephone call to tell you what verdict the jury has come back with and as you wake the following day still numb that you are one of the too few who had their abuser found guilty.... your future life and what that may hold is the furthest thing from your mind.

There is a life after your abuser has been found guilty. I've been living that life for over a year now... it's not easier but it is different, it's not stress and anxiety free but there is hope and it's not free from darkness but there is light within it.

I just wish I could go back to myself months ago when my abuser was found guilty to tell myself:

- It's okay to feel numb, empty, almost nothing.
- It's okay to feel utterly exhausted and drained.
- A guilty verdict will not erase your past, the nightmares and flashbacks may still occur.
- It's okay to still feel angry and have darker days.
- It's okay to feel joy when the realisation washes over you that your abuser is now sat in a prison cell.
- It's okay to enjoy the moments when you feel so empowered you feel you could take on the world.
- It's okay not to feel like celebrating. People around you might act like it is a celebratory time and speak about you being able to move on. It will be said with good meaning but it will make you scream inside at times as you will not view it as a celebration but simply as justice.
- It's okay to need support to digest what has happened and decide how you want to move forward.

RSVP services: 0121 643 0301 Helpline: 0121 643 4136 Email: [info@rsvporg.co.uk](mailto:info@rsvporg.co.uk)



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My counselling at RSVP was my first chance to talk within a safe environment; reporting to the police and the subsequent events that followed were my chance to be heard and believed, and for justice to be served..... this time now is my chance to heal. I'll never forget, it will always be a part of me and my history, but I know that it will increasingly become less of a part of my every day, that the grip of fear that has held me every day for decades will loosen and I will find freedom, peace and joy again.

I know the grip will loosen because it has already started! With the help of psychotherapy there are little things each day that I find out because I'm rediscovering and valuing myself, and it makes me cry with joy.

It's not fair, never has been, that it's us as the survivors that seem to have the hardest journey... we have to keep fighting to survive. But we are stronger and braver than our abusers could ever have imagined, and we have the right to feel and experience all the best bits of life.

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**You don't need to deal with the effects of sexual violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse alone. RSVP are here to offer support to survivors, to enable you to live a life with hope and confidence which is free from abuse.**

### **We offer:**

- Specialist counselling for survivors and their supporters
- Independent sexual violence advocacy (ISVAs) to assist and inform you if you choose to report the rape or if you need support through crisis
- Social groups, coffee mornings and self-help "Cope and Recover" groups
- Emotional support on the telephone helpline 0121 643 4136

These are some of our services. For more ways we can support you contact:-

☎ 0121 643 0301

@ info@rsvporg.co.uk

@ isva@rsvporg.co.uk

@ www.rsvporg.co.uk/services

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